2004 –2005

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

104-05153/

Minister's Message

It is my pleasure to present the performance plan for Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment for 2004-05 and beyond.

The vision for the Department is one of a province where all people, regardless of their situation or circumstances, have the opportunity to contribute to and be included in the economic and social life of their communities.

We believe the path from poverty to independence is jobs. Staff work with potential clients to divert them from the welfare system and assist employable individuals on social assistance to move into the workforce. Because quality, affordable child care is important to parents, the Department will develop 200 new licensed child care spaces in 2004-05.

Over the past few years, our financial assistance programs have been redesigned and the delivery system changed to a centralized contact centre approach. Our child welfare system is being redesigned and is re-focusing from one that relies on alternative placements for children to one that increases a family's ability to properly care for their children. When a child must be removed from the home, kinship care, or placement with extended family, is the first option.

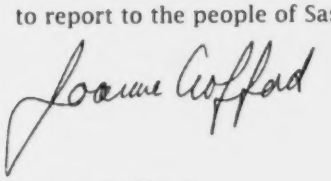
Changes will continue in 2004-05. We will introduce a five-year Housing Policy Framework. One of our first steps will be to start the development of a housing supplement to improve housing quality and help low-income families with the cost of housing.

We will enhance eligibility for the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement and Family Health Benefits programs. A supplement to the Saskatchewan Child Benefit will mean additional monthly income to many Saskatchewan families.

In 2004-05, we will report on the steps we have taken in response to concerns raised by the Provincial Auditor regarding our Child Welfare and Employment and Income Assistance programs.

We will continue to work with other departments to develop a disability policy framework based on the model of citizenship and inclusion.

The following pages will provide more detail on our plans for meeting our objectives. This is part of our commitment to complete the key actions identified in our performance plan and to report to the people of Saskatchewan on our progress in July 2005.



Joanne Crofford
Minister of Community Resources & Employment

Who We Are

The Department's vision is that Saskatchewan people, regardless of differences in needs and circumstances, have opportunities to contribute and be included in the economic and social life of the Province.

The mandate of the Department is to work with citizens to help them build better lives for themselves through economic independence, strong families, inclusive communities, and active involvement in Saskatchewan's labour force and economy. Department programs support employment, healthy child development, independent living for seniors and people with disabilities, and better housing for low and moderate-income people. The Department also offers programs that ensure basic standards of income and child well-being are maintained.

The Department's mandate focuses on the need to:

- Increase participation in the labour market, and help individuals match their employment skills to the needs of the labour market
- Reduce dependency on social assistance and related programs, and improve resources to facilitate transitions to self-reliance
- Increase parents' access to child care and other resources for development of children and economic participation of parents
- Support stable attachment of children to their families and kinship networks, and address the needs of children in need of protection or care
- Improve housing outcomes for lower and moderate-income people, and encourage home ownership and self-reliance in housing
- Help individuals and families address the impacts of disability, and encourage accommodation and inclusion of people with disabilities in labour markets and communities
- Help communities increase their capacity to support the well-being and inclusion of all individuals and families
- Provide financial and other assistance to individuals, families or organizations to help achieve the goals of economic independence and inclusion in families and communities
- Work with employers, communities, other departments and other governments to improve opportunities and outcomes for all Saskatchewan people

Community Resources and Employment is organized into four major program divisions and a number of corporate service branches and divisions. It is one of the largest departments in the provincial government with approximately 2,500 employees.

The **Employment and Income Assistance Division** offers a range of financial and employment-related supports and services to people experiencing difficulty remaining financially independent. The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan provides a basic minimum income for individuals and families, while other income security programs help families meet the needs of their children and assist parents to remain in the work force. The Child Care Branch licenses homes and centres to provide quality day care.

Career and Employment Services, delivered through regional offices across the Province, helps individuals find and maintain a job. Services include training benefits for eligible individuals, work experience opportunities, supports to individuals so they can remain employed and supports to employers to attract and recruit workers.

The **Community Living Division** supports the development of inclusive communities for individuals with intellectual disabilities through the provision and co-ordination of a variety of services that deal with the impact of disability. Some services are provided directly to individuals and their families through social work staff and program consultants located in regions throughout the Province and in Valley View Centre, a long-term care facility in Moose Jaw; however, most services are delivered through an extensive system of community-based social, residential and early childhood service agencies.

The **Housing Division** supports housing self-reliance among low and moderate-income households. The Housing Division supplies staff services and manages the housing resources of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), a Saskatchewan Crown corporation that manages approximately $2.7 billion in public housing assets. The division manages social and affordable housing programs and leads the development of housing policies on behalf of the provincial government. SHC has operating agreements with more than 450 organizations, including local housing authorities, housing co-operatives and non-profit agencies.

The **Child and Family Services Division** provides programs and services to children and youth whose safety and well-being are at risk. Staff work with families to prevent further family breakdown. Child protection services are provided to children who have been abused or neglected. Appropriate residential and personal services are provided to children in care of the Minister. The Department has agreements with 17 First Nations Agencies to deliver child welfare services on reserves. The division is also responsible for Saskatchewan's adoption, post-adoption and intercountry adoption programs. The division has recently undergone significant change and continues to place increased emphasis on developing new programs, services and resources to increase the ability of troubled families to successfully care for their children and to avoid crisis situations that require child protection or child welfare involvement.

Five **Regional** Offices and service centers located in 22 communities deliver most of the Department's programs. The Department provides public access to Internet job postings, labour market information and career services through Can-Sask Centres located in 20 communities. The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation operates through territory offices serving seven geographic regions. The territory offices work with local housing authorities and other community agencies.

Corporate Support Branches include the Human Resources Division, the Intergovernmental Relations Branch, the Communications and Public Education Branch, the Strategic Policy Branch, the Research and Evaluation Branch, and the Information Technology Services Division. The Finance and Property Management Division oversees the Department budget and manages the property assets of the Department through contracts with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation (SPMC).

The **Office of Disability Issues**, established in 1998, serves as a focal point for provincial government initiatives on disability and performs a co-ordinating role across Government in addressing disability issues and policies. The Minister of Community Resources and Employment is also the Minister Responsible for Disability Issues. The Office of Disability Issues is hosted by Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment.

Plan at a Glance

The 2004-05 Performance Plan for Community Resources and Employment builds on the 2003-04 plan. The Department's strategic plan contains a vision of a province in which every citizen has opportunities to contribute and benefit from participation in the economic and social life of the Province. This plan continues to move the Province toward this vision.

The plans outlined in this document are an ambitious multi-year endeavour. The key actions put forward for 2004-05 will lay the groundwork for further activities in the future. The Department will report on progress with respect to these activities in its 2004-05 Annual Report.

POLICY AND SERVICE PARTNERS

The Department maintains service delivery agreements with several hundred community-based organizations, housing authorities, First Nations and Métis organizations. These organizations represent a significant part of the Department's overall delivery system. They are primarily non-profit entities with a membership, an elected board of directors, and paid staff. Most have mixed funding bases of grants, donations, fees and fundraising. These organizations provide

a broad range of services including child care, child nutrition programs, early childhood development, trusteeship, tenant services, residential care, supported living, employment and vocational training.

The nature of the relationship between the Department and its community-based partners varies across program areas.

The Department is a signatory to a three-way partnership agreement between the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres and the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living that establishes a commitment to work together to maximize the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan.

The Department works with other departments and agencies on interdepartmental strategies designed to improve economic and social conditions among Aboriginal people and people in the north; initiatives like *KidsFirst* and School*Plus* that are improving outcomes for children, particularly those in low-income families; and on a common interdepartmental approach to disability issues. The Department is also involved in recent interdepartmental initiatives to support people with cognitive disabilities and who have significant behavioural challenges such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Acquired Brain Injury, Autism, developmental and intellectual disabilities.

The Department represents the Province in working with the federal government and other provinces and territories on initiatives such as the National Child Benefit, Early Childhood Development, Early Learning and Child Care, the Affordable Housing Agreement, the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement, and the new Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities.

Partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations strengthen the Department's ability to serve Aboriginal communities. The Department's work with First Nations and Métis organizations focuses on consultation and the development of collaborative approaches, capacity building within Aboriginal communities and the development of service relationships and partnerships to address gaps in service delivery to Aboriginal people.

GOAL #1

Economic independence and self reliance

OBJECTIVE 1 - *Increase labour market attachment for persons with multiple barriers to employment including low-income*

Performance Measures:

- Families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (monthly average)
- Employment placement of people with intellectual disabilities
- Youth cases (age 18-24) on Saskatchewan Assistance Plan
- Proportion of people with low-income (five year average)
- Provincial social assistance dependency rate

OBJECTIVE 2 - *Reduce dependency on highly subsidized and structured government initiatives*

Performance Measures:

- Saskatchewan Assistance Plan caseload and beneficiaries (monthly average)
- Low-income and special needs people on waiting lists for SHC-owned properties
- Social housing clients moving to private rental or ownership

The Department will also be developing and reporting on a new measure – the number of Employment Insurance (EI) individuals who have returned to work as a result of supports offered by the Department. This will measure the Department's success in getting current and past EI beneficiaries back to work as quickly as possible.

OBJECTIVE 3 - *Provide fair, effective last-resort economic protections when needed*

Performance Measure:

- Saskatchewan Assistance Plan clients self-managing rent

In addition, quality assurance measures are being developed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of social assistance programs and payments.

GOAL #2

Inclusion in families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1 - *Keep children in functional families*

Performance Measure:

- Licensed child care spaces for special needs children

OBJECTIVE 2 - *Reduce reliance on child welfare services that separate families*

Performance Measures:

- Number of children in care of the Minister
- Proportion of extended family versus foster home placements for children

OBJECTIVE 3 - *Maintain quality residential care standards*

Performance Measures:

- Under development

The Department has developed a new system to track quality assurance in child welfare. The measures being developed here will reflect how well standards are being met.

OBJECTIVE 4 - *Support people with disabilities and seniors to live independently in the community*

Performance Measures:

- Number of tenants in subsidized housing with assisted living services for seniors
- Number of admissions to Valley View Centre
- People with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View Centre to community residential alternatives
- People with intellectual disabilities living in own residences with minimal life skills support through supported independent living programs

2004-05 Financial Overview

The Department and its provincial government partners have successfully obtained significant resources to support transitional investment strategies. This has been achieved through multi-lateral federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) agreements like the National Child Benefit, Early Childhood Development agreement, the Early Learning and Care framework, Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), and the new Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities. The Department is also generating fiscal room for structural change through its reform successes; in particular, by reducing costs of welfare dependency.

The following outlines the 2004-05 appropriation for direct program delivery and grants to third parties.

2004-05 ESTIMATES	*(in thousands of dollars)*
Employment and Income Assistance	$ 314,615
Housing	22,882
Early Childhood Development	3,574
Regional Service Delivery	69,433
Child Care	23,464
Community Living	78,110
Administration and Office of Disability Issues	7,482
Child and Family Services	64,565
Accommodation and Central Services	18,129
Total Appropriation	$ 602,254
Capital Acquisitions	(1,155)
Amortization	1,667
Total Expense	$ 602,766
FTE Staff Complement	2,095.5

Trends and Issues

The demographic makeup of the Province presents both challenges and opportunities for Saskatchewan in the years ahead. Specific sub-groups of the population — single parents, First Nations families, young people, and people with disabilities — face greater difficulties in the labour market. Knowing how different demographic groups are faring in society, and the type of labour market they face, helps to plan for future services.

AGING POPULATION

Saskatchewan has both the highest proportion of seniors and the highest proportion of young people among the provinces. The size of the Province's working age population (15 to 64 years of age) is expected to peak in 2010, then slowly decline. The aging population will result in a shortage of young workers to sustain the labour force. As the Province's population ages, the population dependency ratios will increase, resulting in greater demand on social programs.

FIRST NATIONS POPULATIONS

The First Nations population is projected to increase to 30 per cent of the provincial population by 2016 and the working age population is expected to double by 2021. Large numbers of First Nations young people will seek to enter the labour force. With the overall aging of the labour force, the entry of new young workers constitutes a potential advantage for the Province.

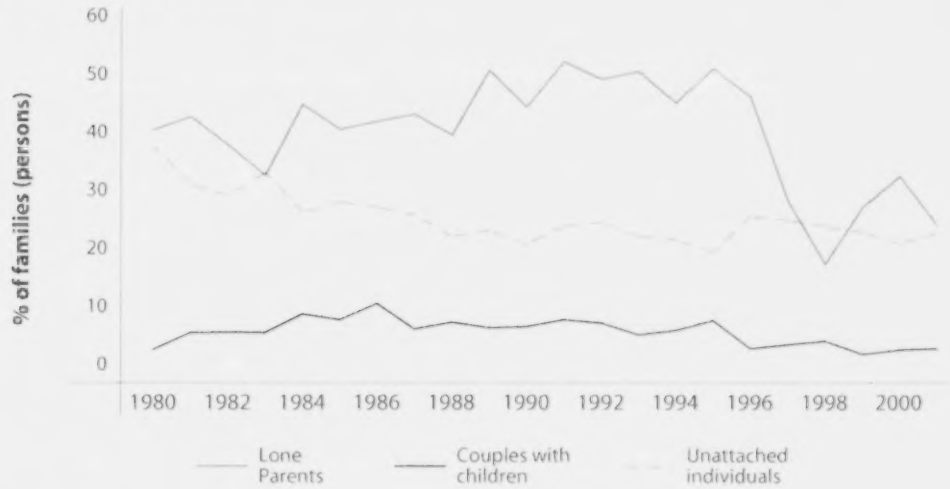
FAMILY STRUCTURES

The structure of Saskatchewan families is changing. Since 1981, the percentage of lone parents in the Province has increased from 14.6 per cent to 25.4 per cent. Continued employment growth among women, along with families with two income earners, places increased demand on child care services.

POVERTY AND LOW-INCOME

The incidence of low-income has declined in Saskatchewan since the 1990's, particularly in the case of single parent families. Nevertheless, household incomes have generally not kept pace with the cost of living. Increases in the costs of basic necessities and shelter costs place a greater burden on lower-income families who are less able to absorb increases in the cost of living. (Source: Statistics Canada, *Income Trends in Canada*. 1980-2001).

AFTER TAX LOW INCOME



EMPLOYMENT

As the aging labour force retires, people not currently in the labour force have the opportunity to improve their economic position through employment. Although there has been a decline in jobs in the agriculture sector over the past five years, this decline has been more than offset by job growth in the non-agriculture sector. With proper training and educational opportunities, groups who have typically been unemployed or underemployed may achieve greater economic independence through work.

HOUSING

The majority of Saskatchewan people are well housed; however, an estimated 56,000 households, most of them in inner cities or the north, have housing problems. Physical adequacy and the cost of housing are the major issues.

Populations at greatest risk of experiencing housing need are those on social assistance, lone parent households, Aboriginal households, persons living alone, and people with disabilities.

Housing is a basic need that affects a family's economic independence, health and the school performance of children. The challenge for the Department is to address the affordability of housing for low-income households and align the incentives for both renters and owners around better housing conditions.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Department employs approximately 2,500 people. Like other employers, its workforce is aging. Over the next 10 years, in addition to normal staff turnover, nearly one quarter of the workforce is expected to retire.

Attracting and retaining skilled and specialized staff will become a greater issue. The Department's workforce must also reflect the diversity of the provincial population and the Department must position itself to take advantage of the growing Aboriginal labour pool. Increased focus must also be given to employment of people with disabilities.

BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

Barriers to participation present challenges as we work to achieve the goals of the strategic plan. Finding ways to overcome these barriers has been part of major policy initiatives, such as the approaches taken in *Building Independence*. Major barriers to increased participation by disadvantaged groups in society include:

- lack of education or skills needed for employment
- access to affordable, adequate housing as a base for employment and children's school success
- limited childcare choices for low-income parents as they work, attend school or training
- need for strategies that support greater integration and participation by persons with disabilities
- lack of services that help a greater number of disadvantaged people find and keep a job

Changes from 2003-04 Performance Plan

The goals and objectives included in the Department's 2004-05 Performance Plan remain unchanged from those published last year. New actions are reported to align the plan with the Department's directions over the next several years. The Department has refined some performance measures, and will be reporting on performance in additional areas, reflecting public commitments made during the year to report on quality assurance measures implemented in child welfare services and the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. New measures being developed for quality assurance standards in social assistance and in child welfare will replace the following measures that have been dropped due to measurement difficulties and non-representative data sources:

- Income security program financial error rates
- Number of family reunification sites
- Proportion of children in child protection families taken into care
- Proportion of repeat involvement in child protection cases
- Average length of involvement in child protection cases
- Per cent of children in care of the Minister with individualized case plans

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

GOAL #1

Economic independence and self reliance

OBJECTIVE 1 - *Increase labour market attachment for persons with multiple barriers to employment, including low-income*

For most in society, employment is their main source of income and is the main route for improved well-being. It is important that every person who could be employed has the opportunity to do so, to reduce disadvantage, increase personal well-being, and support the health of the economy.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Increase the number of low-income families receiving Family Health Benefits by extending the eligible income range for families to qualify for the program.
- Intensify labour market services for individuals who are not immediately ready for jobs by providing appropriate and individualized employment supports, and creating an additional 130 long-term employment placements for persons with disabilities.
- Create an additional 200 licensed child care spaces as part of the multi-year Child Care Saskatchewan Initiative.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (monthly average)	7,710 families *[2003-04, estimated average]*

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) was introduced in 1998 to help low-income parents with child-related costs of working. The program also supplements maintenance income. Utilization of this program is an indication that low-income families are choosing employment rather than social assistance.

The measure is based on the monthly average of families receiving SES payments, as obtained from Department data systems.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Employment placement of people with intellectual disabilities (number of long-term individuals)	131 placements *[As of September 2003]*

The Department works with employers, families and communities to help people with intellectual disabilities gain greater independence through employment. As part of the route to independence, people are supported in a variety of job settings.

This measure reports the number of people with intellectual disabilities who are getting employment, work experience and developing life skills.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Youth cases (age 18-24) on Saskatchewan Assistance Plan	5,629 cases (19.5% of caseload) *[2003-04; estimated average]*

People who establish dependency patterns early in life often have greater difficulty establishing long-term self-sufficiency. The Department works closely to ensure youth in financial need make a transition to employment and self-reliance.

The measure is based on the monthly average of young persons receiving social assistance payments, as determined by Department data systems.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Proportion of people with low-income (five year average)	All persons: 9.3% Children: 10.8% *[Annual average 1997-2001; latest data available]*

There are a number of measures of low-income. In this case, the Department is using the Statistics Canada Low-income Cutoff after tax measure. It measures the number of people who spend more than 64 per cent of their post-tax income on basic necessities. If tracked over time it will help indicate progress in reducing low-income and increasing economic inclusion.

The measure is based on Statistics Canada data and is calculated as a five year moving average, to account for sampling distortions that may occur from year to year. The most recent available income data is for the 2001 tax year.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Provincial social assistance dependency rate	5.3% *[March 2003]*

Social assistance is affected by many external economic trends, such as unemployment. If reliance on social assistance is declining, holding economic conditions notionally constant, this is an indicator of progress in reducing economic exclusion.

The measure is calculated as the number of provincial social assistance recipients in March of each year, as a percentage of the provincial population under 65 years of age. The baseline reflects the most recent data from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD).

OBJECTIVE 2 - *Reduce dependency on highly subsidized and structured government initiatives*

Programs like social assistance and social housing are highly costly and provide a highly structured environment for citizens. Though they form an important economic safety net, they have detrimental social effects that may degrade people's capacities for greater self-sufficiency.

During 2004-05, the Department will be developing and reporting on a new measure – the number of Employment Insurance (EI) recipients who have returned to work as a result of supports offered by the Department. The Employment Insurance Program is a social transfer program that in some instances is used as a regular source of income during periods of the year for individuals with low and unsustained attachment to the labour market. Saskatchewan administers the "Part II" benefits that accrue under EI to those individuals that Canada determines are eligible for Employment Insurance. Community Resources and Employment and Saskatchewan Learning provide the array of programs/services/supports that enable attainment of provincial targets. Targets are negotiated annually with HRSD Canada. They focus on getting EI active claimants back to work as quickly as possible, and also at helping those who have received EI benefits within the past three years to attach to and remain in the labour market. Savings to the EI account are also part of the targets.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Develop a new Family Housing Supplement linked to quality housing to ease affordability issues for low-income renter households on social assistance and the working poor.
- Introduce a $35/month benefit to all single parents eligible for the Saskatchewan Child Benefit and replace the current similar amount paid under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan.
- Increase participation of low-income families in the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement by extending the range of income at which families are eligible to receive the Supplement.
- Develop pilot projects to promote asset accumulation options that address long-term housing affordability, and increase home-ownership for lower income families.
- Develop 2,000 affordable housing units by 2008 for low and moderate income households.
- Negotiate appropriate return to work targets in conjunction with Saskatchewan Learning.
- Design an appropriate targeted wage subsidy capacity that will round out the Department's array of supports to EI eligible individuals and facilitate quick labour market returns.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Saskatchewan Assistance Plan	
• Caseload (monthly average)	28,890
• Beneficiaries (monthly average)	52,270
	[2003-04; estimated average]

The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan is a last-resort source of income support for people who have no other alternatives. A reduction in the number of households and persons dependent on this program is an indication of better outcomes for low-income people in Saskatchewan.

The measure is calculated as a monthly average over a period of 12 months.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Low-income and special needs people on waiting list for SHC-owned housing	2,600 (1,400 families and 1,200 seniors) *[September 2003]*

Reduced waiting lists for social and affordable housing is an indicator of the success of private housing markets at meeting low-income peoples' housing need and of the Department's success in helping low-income people improve their ability to buy better housing through employment.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Social housing clients moving to private rental or ownership	Under development

Social housing is a scarce resource that can never meet all housing needs of low-income people. To be effective, social housing must be part of a system that helps people move through this type of resource to greater self-reliance in housing, whether as a tenant or homeowner.

This measure has been developed as part of a new housing data system. It will begin tracking social housing clients leaving social housing in terms of where they are going and why they are leaving social housing. Data on this measure will be available later in 2004-05.

OBJECTIVE 3 - *Provide fair and effective last-resort economic protection when needed*

Social assistance is an important last-resort source of income for some people. While it is important that social assistance be available where necessary, it should be a fair system that meets basic needs and supports a transition to greater economic and social independence.

The Department has taken new steps to ensure the accuracy and reliability of social assistance payments. New review and documentation processes have been implemented to ensure that payments accurately reflect the most current conditions and needs of those receiving assistance. New data systems have been developed to help report on the outcome of these new quality assurance processes. Measures of program accuracy, based on the new systems, are being developed and will be reported on during the 2004-05 fiscal year. These measures will replace the previous performance measure on the financial error rate.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Improve controls and reliability of payments in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan through new pre-audit processes; annual reviews of all files; new system controls; and enhanced case reviews and file verification.
- Simplify the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan by creating a flat rate benefit for new fully employable cases entering the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and creating more opportunities for clients to manage their budgets themselves.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Saskatchewan Assistance Plan clients self-managing rent	10,970 (62% of caseload) *[2003-04; estimated average]*

It is important that people on social assistance retain and build on the skills that are needed to be self-reliant. One important skill is management of rent and relationships with one's landlord.

GOAL #2

Inclusion in families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1 - *Keep children in functional families*

A healthy, functioning family is the best environment in which a child can grow and thrive. Some families face increased difficulties in parenting or in providing appropriately for the developmental needs of their child. This may be due to challenges arising from one or more members of the family with a disability, or from poverty and related social issues.

Experience has shown that children have poorer outcomes if they lose a relationship with their families. Regardless of how good alternate out-of-home care may be, it is in society's and the child's best interest to support healthy, well-functioning families.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Work with First Nations Child and Family Service agencies to strengthen the child welfare system and report on activities undertaken in response to the 'Baby Andy' report. Activities include:
  - ~ Work with First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) agencies to increase staff and board training for agencies
  - ~ Improve co-ordination between the Department and agencies through providing access and support for an automated common client tracking system (ACI)
  - ~ Establish and staff a unit to support and work with FNCFS agencies for direct case management of children who are transferred to the agencies by the Department
- Support *KidsFirst* intersectoral initiatives.
- Support School^{Plus} intersectoral initiatives.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Licensed child care spaces for special needs children	360 spaces or 5% *[September 2003]*

Child care providers can have difficulty providing for the needs of children with disabilities and other special needs children. If more spaces can be supported to provide for the needs of these children, there is less likelihood that a child will require an out-of-home placement.

***OBJECTIVE 2** - Reduce reliance on child welfare services that separate families*

Sometimes it is necessary to remove a child from their family if the home environment places the child at risk of neglect or abuse. If means can be found to maintain safety and support the needs of the child, with the least possible disruption to the family, the life outcomes for the child can be expected to improve.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Develop a program model for Kinship Care as an alternative to foster care, including:
  - Legal alternatives to court processes
  - A payment system and financial support parameters for compensation
  - Service, support and delivery options
  - Policy and standards of practice
  - Negotiated agreements between the Department, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and FNCFS agencies regarding funding for Kinship Care

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Number of children in care of Minister	2,878 *[September 2003]*

Children can be placed in care of the Minister on a temporary or permanent basis if their parents are unable to care for them safely. Because children who grow up in care of the Minister experience poorer life outcomes than children raised in their own families, it is appropriate to ensure that children are taken into care only when necessary.

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Proportion of extended family versus foster home placements for children	29% *[September 2003]*

Foster care has been the traditional placement resource for a child requiring out-of-home care. This measure indicates the Department's success at extended family placements that maintain a closer link between the child and its family.

OBJECTIVE 3 - *Maintain quality residential care standards*

When a child must be placed outside of the family home, it is important that the new living situation meets the emotional, physical and developmental needs of the child. The Department needs to ensure that all standards of care, and standards of practice are appropriately and effectively being met, to achieve the best outcome for the child.

Adherence to high standards of quality care and professional practice is essential for optimum child outcomes. The Department has developed a new system to track quality assurance in child welfare. The measures developed here will reflect how well standards are being met. These measures will replace previously used performance measures, including the per cent of children in care with individualized case plans, average length of time in care, and repeat involvements in the child care and child protection systems.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Improve quality assurance practices in child welfare through:
  - reviewing all child protection and foster care files on a four month basis
  - developing a new automated system for tracking and monitoring foster care cases
  - ensuring key standards, such as police record checks and home assessments are met

What are we measuring?	**Where are we starting from?**
Under development	Under development

OBJECTIVE 4 - *Support people with disabilities and seniors to live independently in the community*

Individuals and families in society have expectations to conduct their lives with dignity, and little intrusion from public agencies. Where individuals are not capable of living completely independently, supports are often needed to accomplish activities of daily living. These supports must be provided in a manner that does not detract from an individual's dignity and allows for as much independence as possible.

Key Actions for 2004-05

- Release a comprehensive disability policy framework that supports people with disabilities so that they can be included in the social and economic life of our communities and Province.
- Design a new Disability Housing Supplement outside of the social assistance system, to increase affordable housing options for persons with disabilities.
- Provide community options for people with intellectual disabilities.
- In conjunction with Health, Corrections and Public Safety, and the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, implement a strategy for individuals with cognitive disabilities and who have significant behavioural and developmental challenges (e.g.,Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Acquired Brain Injury, Autism, developmental and intellectual disabilities). The strategy will emphasize prevention, assessment and support.
- Develop a functional impact assessment to be used across the Department that would measure the impact of an individual's disability for use in allocating services to persons with disabilities.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of tenants in subsidized housing with assisted living services for seniors	6,800 *[September 2003]*

Tenants in assisted living units are receiving supports that help them maintain their independence in the community.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
Number of admissions to Valley View Centre	0 *[March – September 2003]*

Valley View Centre is a long-term care facility for people with significant intellectual disabilities. Admissions are affected by the effectiveness of service systems and developing alternatives in the community.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
People with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View Centre to community residential alternatives	3 *[March – September 2003]*

Movement of residents from Valley View Centre to the community is a measure of effectiveness of efforts to develop family and community supports that support community inclusion.

What are we measuring?	Where are we starting from?
People with intellectual disabilities living in own residences with minimal life skills support through supported independent living programs	405 *[September 2003]*

Independence and choice are considered important aspects of quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. This measure indicates success at developing supports that provide people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to live independently in their communities. It is measured as the number of people living in their own residence and supported through Community Living Division supported living programs.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

Further information on the Department's organization, legislation, staff, policies, programs and research may be obtained from the Department's website at www.dcre.gov.sk.ca.

Additional information may also be obtained by contacting:

Communications and Public Education Branch
Department of Community Resources and Employment
12th Floor
1920 Broad Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V6

Telephone (306) 787- 3686
Facsimile (306) 787- 8669
E-mail: communications@dcre.gov.sk.ca

www.sasknetwork.ca
For career and labour market information, as well as job postings at Sask Jobs